

A+ Parent Satisfaction Survey: 2007

Prepared for the Arizona State Board of Education

By

**David R. Garcia
Assistant Professor
Arizona State University**

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Education Policy Studies Laboratory

**Arizona State University
Mary Lou Fulton College of Education**
P.O. Box 872411, Tempe, AZ 85287-2411
Telephone: (480) 965-7413
Fax: (480) 965-1880
E-mail: epsf@asu.edu
<http://edpolicylab.org>

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Introduction

The *A+ Parent Satisfaction Survey* has been conducted since 1999. The 2007 survey was commissioned by the Arizona State Board of Education (State Board) and conducted by David R. Garcia, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education at Arizona State University. Dr. Garcia also is the Director of the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI), a collaboration of Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. The purpose of the survey is to measure parental satisfaction with Arizona K-12 public schools. In addition, the survey contains questions to measure parental awareness and opinion of key State Board policies.

Methods

Survey Instrument

In an effort to maintain consistency over time, the wording of the 2007 *A+ Survey* parent satisfaction questions is identical or nearly identical to the parent satisfaction questions in previous *A+ Surveys*. The parental satisfaction questions have been carried over, nearly verbatim, since the initial *A+ survey*. In addition, many questions from the 2006 *A+ survey* are

retained in the current survey. In most cases, the report includes the survey results for the most recent three years (2005-2007).

The full survey instrument was designed by Dr. David R. Garcia and Dr. Bruce Merrill of Arizona State University.

Survey Administration

The survey results in this report are based on 403 telephone interviews with a statewide random sample of adult heads of household living in Arizona. The sample generalizes to all adult heads of household living in Arizona with children attending public schools, including charter schools. The samples were stratified by county to ensure they were representative of all adults living in Arizona.¹

The interview schedule was pre-tested and the interviews conducted by professional interviewers at the Summit Group in Phoenix. The survey was administered from June 1, 2007 to June 8, 2007. The surveys were conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

If an interview was not successfully completed after eight callbacks, random substitution was allowed with telephones numbers in the same prefix. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were interviewed successfully. Respondents were given the option of taking the survey in Spanish or English. The sample demographics are contained in the final section of the report.

The sampling error for the statewide sample is plus or minus 4.9 percent, given a response to a question of 50 percent and assuming a 95 percent level of significance. Sampling

error varies based on the distribution of the responses. Sampling errors for various percentages when the sample size is 400 are shown below:

	Sampling Error
50%	4.9%
40% or 60%	4.8%
30% or 70%	4.5%
20% or 80%	3.9%
10% or 90%	2.9%

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). All of the following tables reflect the percent of respondents.

Findings

Parent Satisfaction with Public Schools

The opinions of Arizona parents toward their public schools are consistent with national results. Arizona parents perceive the schools that their children attend more favorably than Arizona public schools in general.² While 36 percent of parents rate the school their oldest child attends as “A+” or “A,” only 7 percent of parents grade all schools as highly. Seventy-seven percent of Arizona parents grade the school their oldest child attends an “A” or a “B” while only 34 percent of Arizona parents grade all Arizona public schools an “A” or a “B” (Tables 1 and 2)

The 2007 parent ratings of the school their oldest child attends are statistically identical to the 2006 results. It is noteworthy, however, that the percentage of parents rating their public school an “A+” or “A” increased by 4 percentage points from 2006. Also, parent ratings of all public schools are nearly identical at the high and low ends of the scale with some variation in

the middle of the rating scale. Compared to 2006, a slightly lower percentage of parents rated all public schools with a “C” and a higher percentage of parents rated all public schools with a “D” rating in 2007.

Table 1: Grading *Your* Public School (2007 and 2006)

		A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the school your oldest child attends?	2007	7	29	41	17	4	1	<1
	2006	5	27	40	20	5	2	<1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2: Grading *All* Arizona Public Schools (2007 and 2006)

		A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the job public schools in Arizona are doing?	2007	<1	6	28	36	17	4	8
	2006	1	7	27	42	13	5	6

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

After a period of declining parent satisfaction ratings in recent years, the percentage of parents rating their school with an “A+” or “A” is nearly identical to the original A+ results. In 1999, 37 percent of Arizona parents rated the school their oldest child attended with an “A+” or “A” and 4 percent of parents rated their school a “D” or “F” (Table 3).³ Compared to the 1999 results, the 2007 parent ratings are nearly identical with 36 percent of ratings in the “A+” and “A” categories.

Table 3: Grading Arizona Schools (1999)

	A+	A	B	C	D	F	No Opinion
What grade would you give to the school your oldest child attends?	7	30	43	15	3	1	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

School Accountability

The State Board of Education sets policy for both of Arizona’s school accountability systems, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Arizona LEARNS. The degree to which parents are familiar with NCLB was assessed prior to seeking parental opinion of the federal accountability system. The purpose of the familiarity questions was to gather the opinions of only those parents who stated they are familiar enough with NCLB to provide an informed opinion. As in 2006, a substantial majority of parents are familiar with the federal NCLB accountability system and they are becoming more familiar with NCLB over time. Seventy percent of parents are either very or somewhat familiar with NCLB. The percent of parents who are familiar with NCLB has increased by 3 percentage points since 2006, while the percent of parents not familiar with the law has decreased 4 percentage points during this same time period (Table 4). Over the past year, parent opinion of NCLB has become more negative and the change is statistically significant. In 2007, 45 percent of parents rated NCLB either “favorable” or “very favorable” a drop of 13 percentage points from 2006. Conversely, the percentage of parents rating NCLB as either “unfavorable” or “very unfavorable” has increased by 9 percentage points (Table 5).⁴

Table 4: Knowledge of NCLB

		Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Very Familiar	Not at all Familiar	No Opinion
How familiar would you say you are with the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill passed by Congress in 2001?	2007	26	44	18	11	1
	2006	27	40	24	9	<1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5: Opinion of NCLB

		Very Favorable	Generally Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
From what you have heard or read about NCLB, what is your opinion of the act?	2007	12	33	31	18	5
	2006	20	38	25	15	3

Note: This table includes only respondents who were either “very” or “somewhat” familiar with NCLB. The total number of respondents equaled 283 and 272 in 2007 and 2006, respectively.

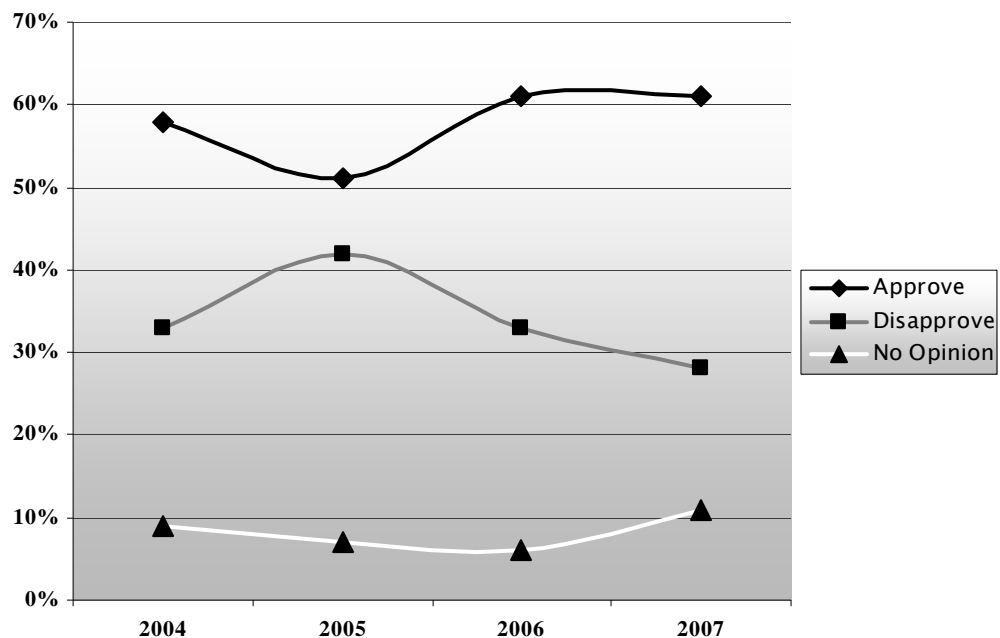
AIMS as a Graduation Requirement

This spring, the class of 2007 was the second cohort of Arizona students required to pass Arizona’s Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) to graduate from high school. After a decline from 2004 to 2005 in the parental support for AIMS as a graduation requirement, parental support for AIMS increased considerably from 2005 to 2006. With the graduation requirement now in effect, parental support of AIMS has remained constant over the last two years, with 61 percent of parents in 2007 approving of the test as a graduation requirement. In addition, a lower percentage of parents disapprove of the AIMS graduation policy but the decline is due to a shift in parental opinion from disapprove to no opinion (see Table 6 and Figure 1).

Table 6: AIMS as a Graduation Requirement (2007)

	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
Do you approve or disapprove of requiring students to pass the AIMS test before they graduate from high school?	61	28	11

Figure 1: AIMS as a Graduation Requirement, by Year



The 2007 survey also includes two questions that gauge parents' opinions on the difficulty of the AIMS test and whether the test covers the skills and academic tasks that are most important for their child to learn. Parents were asked if they thought the AIMS test was "too easy," "about right," or "too hard" for their oldest child to pass. Sixty-seven percent of parents believe that the AIMS test is "about right" in terms of difficulty for their oldest child (Table 7).

Thirty-eight percent of parents also believed that the AIMS test covers important material, while 32 percent of parents did not agree that AIMS covers appropriate skills and tasks. Notably, nearly a third of parents had no opinion of the AIMS contents, an indication that many parents are not familiar with the test contents to provide an opinion (Table 8).

Table 7: AIMS Difficulty

	Too Easy	About Right	Too Hard
Do you think the AIMS test is too easy, about right, or too hard for your oldest child to pass?	17	67	16

Table 8: AIMS Content

	Yes	No	No Opinion
In your opinion, does AIMS cover the skills and academic tasks that you think are most important for your oldest child to learn?	38	32	31

School Report Cards

The Arizona Department of Education publishes School Report Cards as an information source for parents about school policies and academic performance. Seventy-one percent of parents have reviewed a School Report Card, which represents a six percentage point increase compared to 2006. A majority of parents (57 percent) who have viewed a School Report Card find the information contained in them to be either “very informative” or “generally informative”

(Table 9). Approximately a third of consulted the School Report Cards in making their most recent school choice decision (Table 10).

Table 9: Opinion of School Report Cards

	Very Informative	Generally Informative	Somewhat Informative	Not Informative	No Opinion
In your opinion, how informative are the School Report Cards?	18	39	33	7	2

Note: This table only includes respondents who viewed the School Report Cards as “very” or “generally” informative. The total number of respondents equals 287.

Table 10: Use of School Report Cards

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Did you review a School Report Card to help make the decision to send your oldest child to the school they presently attend?	33	65	2

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Conclusion

The *A+ Survey* is an informative measure of parental satisfaction with Arizona K-12 public schools. The general public and state organizations rely on the annual ratings as an independent assessment of the overall state of Arizona public schools and as a means of benchmarking the impact of state initiatives. The survey is also a unique opportunity for the State Board to solicit feedback from parents about its policies.

Sample Demographics

The following tables detail the demographic characteristics of the statewide sample of survey respondents.

Table 11: Child's School Level

Does your oldest child attend a...			
	2005	2006	2007
Elementary	37	42	50
Middle school	19	20	18
High school	44	37	32
Refused	<1	1	0

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 12: Child Attends a Charter School

Does your oldest child attend a charter school?			
	2005	2006	2007
Yes	23	16	12
No	77	84	88
No opinion	<1	N/A	N/A

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 13: Child Under Age 6

Do you have a child or children under the age of 6?			
	2005	2006	2007
Yes	31	37	38
No	69	63	62

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 14: Language Spoken in Household

Which of the following best characterizes your household?			
	2005	2006	2007
We speak only English in our household	83	79	80
We speak mainly English, but another language as well	17	18	19
We speak little or no English in our household	0	3	<1
Refused to answer	0	N/A	N/A

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 15: Race/Ethnicity of Surveyed Parents

In terms of race or ethnicity, which of the following do you <u>most</u> identify with?			
	2005	2006	2007
White or Anglo	74	67	67
Hispanic or Latino	14	18	16
Native American	3	4	2
African American	2	3	5
Two or more races	4	5	8
Other	2	4	2
Refused to answer	<1	N/A	<1

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 16: Parents' Education

How many years of formal education have you completed?			
	2005	2006	2007
High school or less	16	19	15
Some college or trade school	42	42	39
Graduated college	42	39	45
Refused to answer	<1	1	<1

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Table 17: Access to the Internet

Do you have access to the Internet?			
	2005	2006	2007
Yes	91	88	92
No	9	12	8

Table 18: Born in United States

Were you born in the United States?			
	2005	2006	2007
Yes	93	91	95
No	7	10	5

Table 19: Registered to Vote in Arizona

Are you registered to vote in Arizona?			
	2005	2006	2007
Yes	94	91	95
No	6	9	5

Table 20: County of Residence

In what county do you reside?			
	2005	2006	2007
Maricopa	64	59	60
Pima	14	20	24
Other	22	21	16

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 21: Gender of Parent Surveyed

	2005	2006	2007
Male	44	42	34
Female	56	59	66

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 22: Language Used for Survey

	2005	2006	2007
English	100	96	99
Spanish	0	3	<1
Both English and Spanish	0	1	1

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Notes & References

¹ In 2004, the *A+ Survey* was administered via the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) website. Due to a number of limitations associated with the parent sample, the 2004 results are not generalizable to the statewide population of Arizona parents and the 2004 results are not comparable to the results from previous years or to the 2005 results. The 2007 results for the parent satisfaction items are comparable to the 2006 results and comparable to the results from previous years, except 2004.

² Rose, L.C. & Gallup, A.M. (September, 2006). *The 38th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools*. Princeton, N.J. Phi Delta Kappa Retrieved June 15, 2007 from <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0609pol.htm>

³ Behavior Research Center. (May, 2000). *A+ Program Parent Satisfaction Survey*. Phoenix, AZ: Author.

⁴ In the 2006 survey, only 21 percent of parents were either “very familiar” or “familiar” with AZ LEARNS. Because so few parents were familiar with AZ LEARNS and the results were not generalizable to the statewide population, questions pertaining to AZ LEARNS were not asked in the 2007 survey. Specific questions on AZ LEARNS will be considered for future surveys.